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THE CLASSROOM AIDE.

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NEW MEXICO WESTERN STATES SMALL SCHOOLS PROJECT

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TO RELIEVE THE NON-INSTRUCTIONAL BURDEN UPON THE CLASSROOM TEACHER, THE QUEMADO PUBLIC SCHOOLS EXPERIMENTED WITH A TEACHER AIDE PROGRAM, UTILIZING A SINGLE TEACHER AIDE IN ELEMENTARY LANGUAGE ARTS AND HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMED MATHEMATICS THE FIRST YEAR OF THE PROJECT. AS A RESULT OF THE EXPERIMENT'S SUCCESS, THE FOLLOWING SCHOOL YEAR (1963-1964) CLASSROOM AIDES WERE EMPLOYED IN EACH OF THE 4 QUEMADO PUBLIC SCHOOLS COVERING ALL SUBJECT MATTER AREAS. AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE INCREASED NUMBER OF CLASSROOM AIDES EMPLOYED, IT BECAME NECESSARY TO DEFINE A CLASSROOM AIDE, AND OUTLINE AN AIDE'S QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES. USE OF THE CLASSROOM AIDE ALLOWED THE TEACHER MORE TIME FOR INDIVIDUALIZING INSTRUCTION, DEVELOPING TEACHING MATERIALS, AND TRIAL-TESTING CLASSROOM EXPERIMENTS AND DEMONSTRATIONS PRIOR TO THEIR USE. TIME FOR SMALL GROUP INSTRUCTION BECAME MORE OF A REALITY BECAUSE THE TEACHER WAS FREED FROM SUCH NON-INSTRUCTIONAL DUTIES AS COLLECTING MONEY, TAKING ATTENDANCE, AND MARKING OBJECTIVE TYPE TESTS AND WORKBOOKS. IT WAS SUGGESTED THAT A PROGRAM OF TEACHER AIDE PREPARATION BE UNDERTAKEN EITHER BY LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS, OR BY COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES. (DA)

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NEW MEXICO

Western States Small Schools Project

THE CLASSROOM AIDE

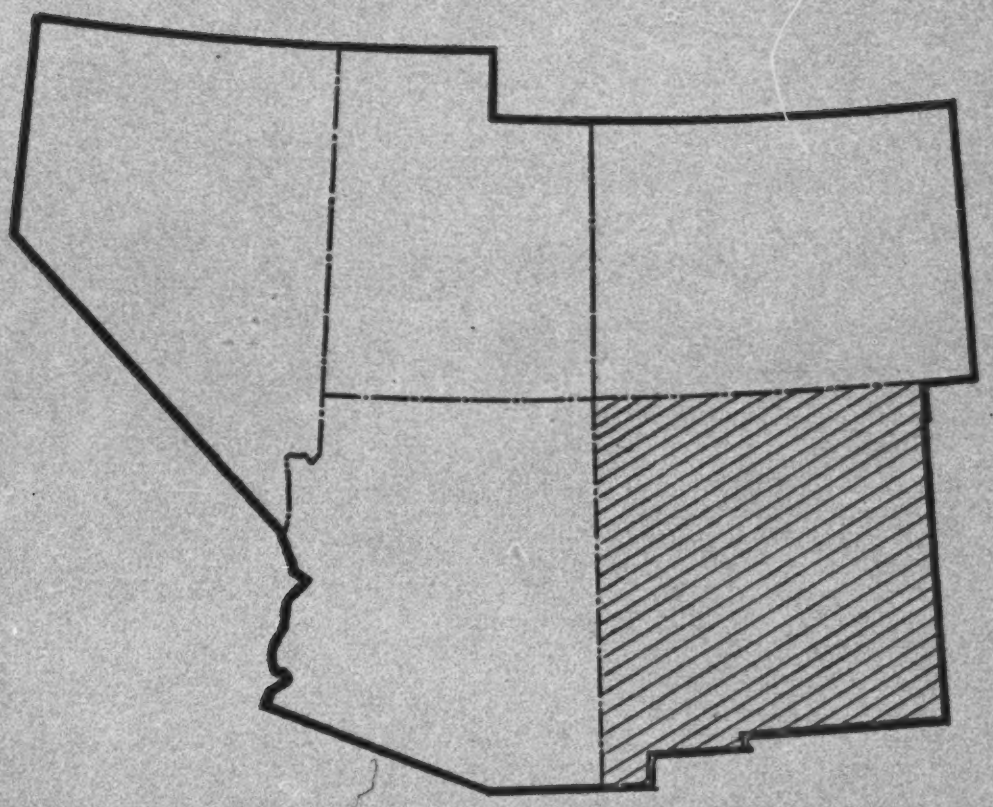

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
FOREWORD	3
BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT OF CLASSROOM AIDE PROJECT	5
CLASSROOM AIDE	6
CONTRIBUTIONS OF CLASSROOM AIDES	9
CONCLUSIONS	12

Foreword

The purpose of this publication is to assist school administrators and teachers contemplating the employment of aides who will perform the non-instructional tasks usually performed by teachers. Non-instructional tasks performed by these aides—called classroom aides, school aides, instructional aides, clerical aides or instructional secretaries—are typing instructional materials, duplicating instructional materials, checking objective type tests, collecting money, taking attendance, and other non-instructional tasks.

This study, carried out in the Quemado Public Schools, Quemado, New Mexico, was conducted under the auspices of the New Mexico Western States Small Schools Project, a project directed by the New Mexico State Department of Education and financed by the Ford Foundation. The salaries of the aides, however, were paid by the Quemado Public Schools. The project was carried out in the Quemado Elementary Schools and in the Quemado High School classes where programmed mathematics courses were used.

The consultant for the project at the elementary level was Dr. Mildred Fitzpatrick, State Director of Elementary Education, New Mexico State Department of Education. The consultant for the project in the high school classes where programmed mathematics courses were used was Miss Lura Bennett, Specialist in Mathematics, New Mexico State Department of Education.

The New Mexico State Board of Education officially established the aide position on August 3, 1965. The title of the position is Classroom Aide. The minimum qualifications are as listed in this report.

DAN D. CHAVEZ
Project Director

Background and Development of Classroom Aide Project

Scene: A first and second grade classroom at Quemado Elementary School.

Suzy, a second grader, raises her hand.

Teacher: "Suzy, I'll see you as soon as I take attendance."

Johnny raises his hand: "Please, teacher."

Teacher: "Not now Johnny, I'm taking the lunch money. Later."

Situations such as these were repeated so often that visiting board members and administrators decided that some help was needed for overburdened teachers to allow them time for more teaching.

Out of such situations evolved the Quemado Classroom Aide Project. The Quemado Public Schools then consisted of four schools:

Name	*Grade*	*Number of Elementary Teachers*
Datil	1-8	2-3
Horse Springs	1-8	1
Pie Town	1-6	1
Quemado	1-12	3 (in grades 1-6)

Analysis of the classroom situation revealed that less than ten minutes per subject were available, and less than five minutes per student were possible for individual instruction. Clearly, some means of providing more efficient use of professional skills of classroom teachers were necessary.

When parents of the Quemado pupils came to realize how little individual attention their children were receiving, they offered to help. A collection was taken up to employ a classroom aide as an experiment.

The Small Schools Project came into existence the following school term, 1962-63. The Quemado Public Schools contacted the State Department of Education and requested participation in the project. They requested that the State Department of Education cooperate with them in developing the classroom aide position.

Objectives of the Project

1. To provide for advancement of pupils at their level of achievement
2. To provide a greater variety of student activities
3. To provide individualized study
4. To free teachers from non-instructional tasks
5. To assist teachers using programmed instruction

During the 1962-63 school term, one classroom aide was employed for the Quemado School. The classroom aide assisted the teacher of grades one and two in the field of language arts. The classroom aide compiled ADA reports and performed other clerical tasks; this allowed the teacher more time for analyzing needs of, and teaching, the students. The classroom aide also assisted the high school teacher using programmed instruction.

In the 1963-64 school term, in addition to the classroom aide in the Quemado School, classroom aides were employed for each of the other three schools. The emphasis on classroom aide assistance shifted from language arts to all subject matter areas.

As a result of the increased number of classroom aides employed, it was found necessary to accomplish the following:

1. Definition of a classroom aide
2. Qualifications of a classroom aide
3. Duties of a classroom aide

Conferences were conducted with the superintendent regarding ways in which the above could be accomplished. The following procedures were decided upon:

1. The superintendent, school board, and teachers of the Quemado Public Schools would develop criteria for each of the requirements as gleaned from on-the-job performance.
2. The director and consultant would compile criteria for the requirements as shown by results of previous teacher aide projects throughout the United States.
3. Visitation teams would observe and record the daily performance of teachers and classroom aides.
4. The observations of visitation teams, criteria prepared by the school personnel.

and criteria compiled by the project director and consultant would be compared for agreement.

Evaluation of the reports revealed that a workshop should be conducted which would involve the school board, administrators, teachers, classroom aides, project director, State Department of Education consultants, and a representative from the New Mexico Education Association. An agenda was developed, and a workshop was conducted.

Criteria for the following were developed:

1. Definition of a Classroom Aide
2. Minimum qualifications of a Classroom Aide
3. Duties of a Classroom Aide
4. Duties of a Classroom Aide in Programmed Instruction
5. Benefits of employing Classroom Aides
6. Role of the Principal and Teachers with Classroom Aides
7. Role of the Superintendent and Local Board of Education with Classroom Aides

Classroom Aide

A classroom aide is a school employee who is qualified by education, experience, and character to relieve one or more teachers of time-consuming, non-instructional tasks so that teachers may devote more time to instruction:

Minimum Qualifications	*Proof or Test*
1. High School Graduate	Diploma or High School GED Certificate
2. Be at least 21 years of age	Birth Certificate
3. Ability to operate A-V machines	Demonstration
4. Ability to operate duplicating machines	Demonstration
5. Ability to type	Demonstration
6. Good handwriting	Demonstration
7. Good oral reading ability	Demonstration
8. Ability to work with children and adults	References from previous positions
9. Mathematical ability	Ability to keep correct school financial records and ability to compute ADA
10. Sense of Professional Ethics	Interview by Principal and Superintendent
11. Emotionally mature	
12. Command of the English language	
13. Attendance at a classroom aide workshop	Certificate of Completion
14. Classroom Aide Permit	To be issued by Chairman, Instructional Services Area, State Department of Education

Duties of a Classroom Aide

1. Take attendance and maintain attendance records
2. Collect money
3. Mark objective-type tests
4. Mark objective-type items in workbooks
5. Duplicate or mimeograph teaching materials
6. Set-up and operate film and over-head projectors and other audio-visual machines (tape-recorders, phonographs, etc.)
7. Write on blackboard
8. Help proctor examinations
9. Clip, mount, and file instructional materials
10. Put up and maintain bulletin boards and display cases
11. Prepare visual teaching aids
12. Locate reference materials for teachers
13. Check out library books for teachers
14. Assist with assemblies and plays (costumes, make-up, etc.)
15. Assist in supervision of restroom periods
16. Assist in supervision of corridors and cafeterias

17. Patrol grounds when recreational skills are not being taught
18. Assemble concrete materials pertinent to classwork
19. Assist in fire drills
20. Play piano for choral groups
21. Help students with wraps
22. Supervise general student behavior
23. Read stories selected by the teacher
24. Reinforce reading skills which have been previously taught by the teacher
25. Assist students to complete assignments missed while absent
26. Relieve teachers of secretarial and clerical tasks:
    a. Type teaching materials and tests
    b. Type orders for films, filmstrips and other A-V materials
    c. File materials
    d. Keep records on lunch program
    e. Maintain student records
    f. Process books and supplies
    g. Type letters to parents
27. Any other task that does not require instructional decision on the part of the school aide

Duties of a School Aide in Programmed Instruction

1. At the beginning of the period, the school aide tells each student where he is in the program (frame number)
2. Administer chapter tests accompanying program
3. Mark chapter tests by means of a scoring key
4. Type teacher-made tests (if any)
5. Select chapter tests as pupils are ready, and refile chapter tests following use
6. Record test grades
7. Supervise pupils in study positions

Ten Most Frequent Duties Performed by Classroom Aides

1. Administering and grading objective-type tests and workbooks
2. Typing, duplicating, and filing instructional materials
3. Assisting in playground activities
4. Supervising controlled reader activities (operating machine, administering tests, grading tests, and filing graded tests)
5. Preparing and maintaining bulletin board materials
6. Recording grades and maintaining student records
7. Preparing visual aids under direction of the teacher
8. Supervising assignments previously explained by the teacher
9. Keeping supplies on hand; reordering when necessary
10. Checking in and checking out library books, and reading stories selected by the teacher

Benefits of Employing Classroom Aide

With the assistance of classroom aides, teachers have more time to devote to activities related to instruction:

1. Prepare better individualized lesson plans
2. Develop teaching materials
3. Plan assignments and units of work on a long-term basis rather than on a day-to-day basis
4. Search for a variety of books and materials from which pupils can learn
5. Preview films and film strips
6. "Run through" a laboratory experiment or demonstration
7. Meet with other teachers for planning purposes
8. Analyze pupil cumulative records
9. Confer with counselor
10. Give more individualized instruction in the classroom
11. Confer with principal
12. Devote more time to small group instruction
13. Schedule conferences with individual pupils
14. Prepare tests

Role of the Principal and Teachers with Classroom Aides

1. The principal shall solicit requests from those teachers who want the services of a classroom aide. If a teacher desires the assistance of a classroom aide, he or she must submit in writing (1) what the classroom aide will do, and (2) the daily and weekly schedule of the classroom aide.
2. After the principal has studied the requests of the teachers for the services of a classroom aide, he should submit three items to the superintendent in writing: (a) Justify the bases for his decision in regard to the assignments of the classroom aide, and (b) Submit a daily and weekly schedule of the classroom aide to the superintendent. (The principal, however, makes modifications of the schedule of the classroom aide as necessity dictates; the superintendent should be informed of any changes in the assignment of the classroom aide), and (c) The principal should recommend for employment, to the superintendent, the classroom aide who best fills the needs of his school.
3. The classroom aide will be under the direction of the teacher to whom she is assigned for that particular time. (The teacher will schedule the specific duties of the classroom aide at least a week ahead of schedule.)

Role of the Superintendent and Local Board of Education with Classroom Aides

1. The superintendent should recommend to the local board the employment of those classroom aides that (1) best fill the needs of the school system, and (2) can meet the qualifications as prescribed.
2. The local Board of Education and the superintendent should justify and request permits for classroom aides from the Chairman, Instructional Services Area, State Department of Education.

Contributions of Classroom Aides to the Instructional Situation

A child must be prepared for learning. His interest must be aroused, a readiness or attitude to learn developed, and adequate experiential background provided before materials are presented. In brief, there must be a preparation for action.

Classroom aides contributed to this preparation for action by assisting classroom teachers in arranging bulletin boards that aroused the interest of students. See picture below.

A bulletin board prepared by a classroom aide.

Classroom aides prepared duplicated materials and arranged furniture for small group work or for combinations of two classrooms. Music was presented through the team teaching approach. Duplicated materials, textbooks, and other necessary equipment was arranged by the classroom aide so that two classrooms could have music together. Also assisting was a mother in the community who played the piano for the class on two afternoons each week. As a result of this enrichment in the curriculum, several musical programs were presented to the community. These programs had not been possible prior to this project.

Experiential background was developed through excursions and creative experiences in the classroom before materials were presented.

As one class began the study of foods and their sources, it became evident that students, even though living in a rural community, had not seen butter churned or cottage cheese made. A mother offered to demonstrate these processes in her home. Students assisted not only in the processes of producing these but also in eating the fruits of their labor.

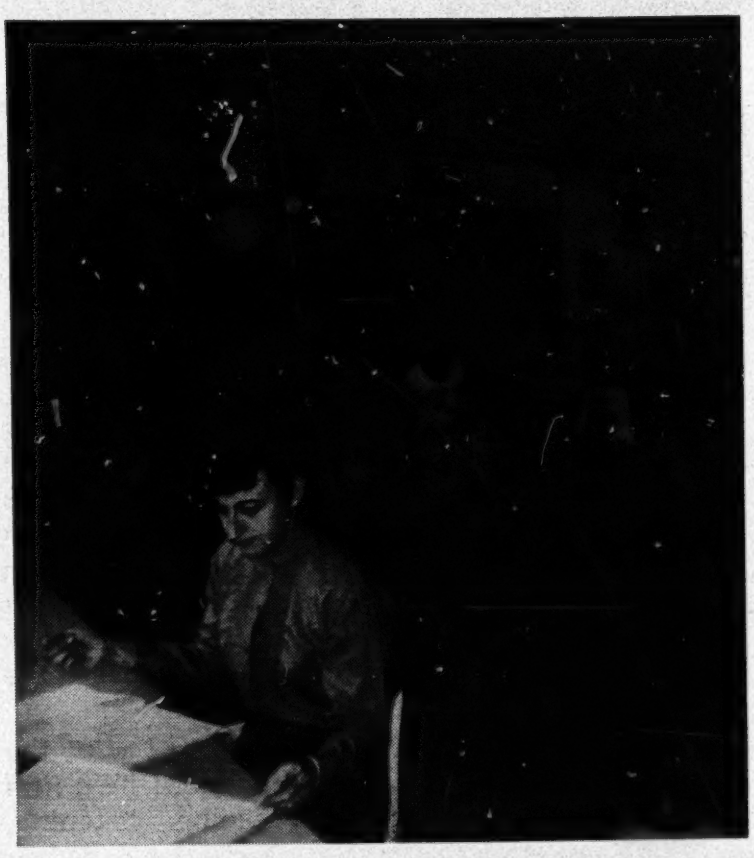
While the teacher and students were away, the classroom aide checked assignments in the English workbooks. See picture below. On the return of the students to the classroom, the teacher discussed the checked assignment and designated the grades.

Experiential backgrounds were built vicariously in some classrooms. This excerpt from a daily log confirms this statement:

"A story in our 3rd grade Social Studies Book inspired my class to do a new and interesting project.

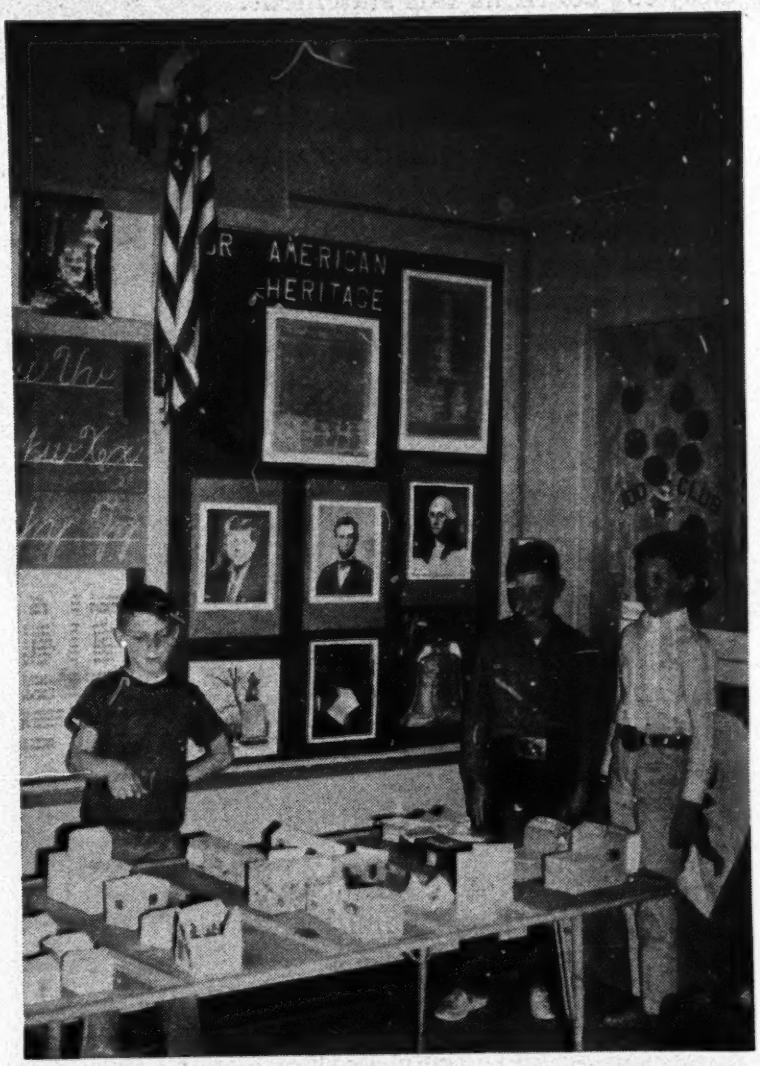
"It all started when we read about Westport. Its many businesses and factories combined with homes and community buildings made interesting discussion for the children in my room as they are from a rural area. They thought it would be fun to reproduce the community of Westport in our classroom.

The classroom aide grades students' assignments.



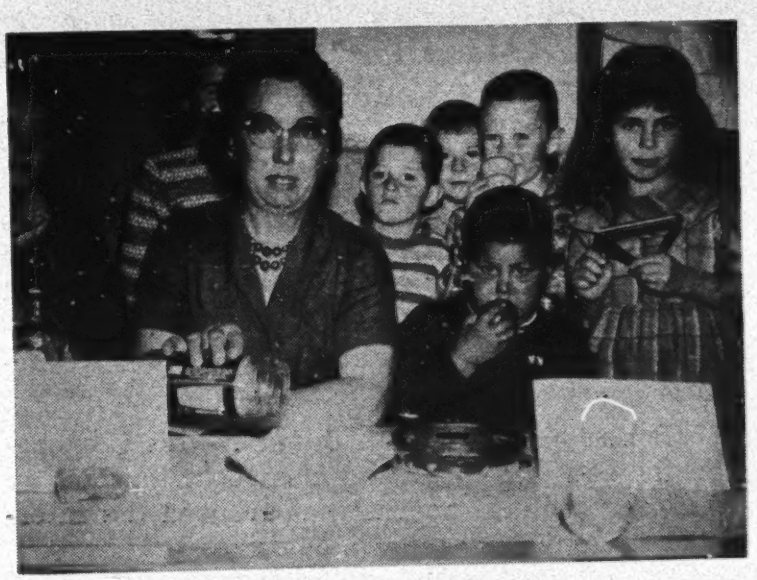
"First, the class decided that, if they were town planners, they would need various buildings and facilities for their town. The various factories, schools, fire stations, churches, shopping centers and other buildings were assigned to a builder. Our contractors brought in all the supplies they thought they would need. Milk cartons, flour, and newspaper played important roles. The classroom aide was called upon to help prepare the forms for the builders to work with. She taped areas closed to disguise the cartons. The builders plastered, painted and landscaped their models. Our city was ready to assemble on the cardboard. Streets were painted on and a railroad track was added. We stood back and viewed with pride our handiwork."

A model village prepared with the assistance of a classroom aide.



Interest was aroused through experiences with concrete materials. A unit on *Finding Out About Things* was developed with first graders. The classroom aide had gathered and prepared the materials for this science demonstration.

An experience chart was developed with the children discovering this generalization: "We find out about things by feeling, seeing, listening,



Science materials assembled and arranged by the classroom aide for the teacher.

smelling, and tasting." Each child had the experience of discovering ways we find out about things. The picture above indicates the various media used.

While this science lesson was being taught with grade one, the classroom aide was pronouncing spelling words for second grade students to write in workbooks.

If a child is to learn, there must be at least one response to a stimulus. To this extent practice is necessary for all learning. Rarely is learning completed with but one experience; therefore, repeated practice is necessary in oral and written skill. Immediate reinforcement of these skills acquired on an individual basis was one of the strengths on the classroom aide project.

The classroom aide pronounced spelling words for students to write in workbooks.

This excerpt from a teacher's daily log supports this:

> "One thing was noticed; prior to this year at least one or two children had a reversal problem in reading. The classroom aide used 'Rhymes to Help Reversal Problems' from the Scott Thompson Phonics book. We do not have any children who reverse words in reading at this time.
>
> "The children seem to read in sentence units with more ease since they have had the additional oral work. Oral expression is definitely better as observed by the teacher.
>
> "Two children were classified pre-first; one was non-English speaking and the other did not enter school until November. Both are reading and their oral expression is good. The child who had to learn the English language talks in complete sentences and her vocabulary appears to be good."

Learning motivated by success is preferable to learning motivated by failure. Individualized instruction gave each student the opportunity to experience a measure of success. Teachers and the classroom aides worked with small groups or with individual students on skills which teachers had identified, such as, word attack skills, comprehension, patterning in spelling, number concepts, and library skills.

The teacher and classroom aide worked with small groups and individual students.

The classroom aide assisted with creative work. The finger painting displayed above chalkboard is one indication of student creativity.

One of the most significant trends in today's schools is the encouragement of creativity. To this end the modern school awakens and develops whatever is unique and distinctive in individual children.

With classroom aide performing routine classroom tasks, the teacher was freed to have more time for discussions with students. In these discussions, questions were used which led to discovery and inquiry. In this warm, friendly atmosphere, creative expression was nourished. This short poem by a nine-year-old girl is only one of many expressions of creative writing. A good sense of rhythm can be noted.

MY HORSE

My horse is company
Full of vigor and brains.
The last time I saw it
He was roaming the plains.

In the modern elementary school, the art program consists of art appreciation and art expression. Art expression was taught in one of the one-room schools through the medium of finger painting. The classroom aide collected, prepared, and arranged necessary materials for this task. The picture above shows the results.

Conclusions

Through classroom observations and evaluation of teachers' reports, the following conclusions are made:

1. An instructional environment was created whereby students received individualized attention from both teacher and classroom aide.
2. Individual students' needs, interests, and achievements were analyzed and realistic goals were established with the assistance of a classroom aide.
3. Classroom teachers could use too many workbooks and too much duplicated materials since classroom aides would do the checking. The creative arts could become stereotyped and lack emphasis if too much stress is placed on the use of workbooks and duplicated materials.
4. The effectiveness of a classroom aide is determined by the short-range and long-range planning of the classroom teacher.
5. Workshops for preparing classroom aides should be conducted. They may be conducted by either local school systems or colleges and universities.

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